

# Salah extends Liverpool lead

Salah penalty puts Liverpool seven points clear again with a 1-0 victory at Brighton

AFP | Brighton, United Kingdom

Liverpool bounced back from two consecutive defeats to remain on course for a first league title in 29 years, but were made to wait before breaking down an obdurate Brighton thanks to Mohamed Salah's 50th-minute penalty in a 1-0 win yesterday.

Victory reestablished Jurgen Klopp's side's seven-point lead over Manchester City at the top of the table, which was reduced to four when the champions inflicted Liverpool's only Premier League defeat of the campaign to breathe new life into the title race nine days ago.

The Reds were far from their fluent best on England's south coast, but ground out a vital win to settle any nerves caused by that defeat thanks to a 13th clean sheet in 22 league games this season.

Klopp made wholesale changes for Monday's FA Cup elimination to Wolves to underline his priorities for this season and he recalled a host of first-team regulars, including Salah.

However, the Egyptian and the rest of Liverpool's forward line were starved of service before the break as Brighton sat deep and the visitors dominated possession without any cutting edge.

Roberto Firmino just failed to reach a dangerous Andy Robertson cross, while Xherdan Shaqiri nodded inches wide.

But neither side managed a single shot on target in the first half as Glenn Murray headed Albion's best chance over the bar.

Salah immediately signalled a change in Liverpool's intent after half-time as his powerful shot at the end of a purposeful run was well saved by David Button.

Brighton, though, were architects of their own downfall moments later. Salah was given too much room inside the area to turn and Pascal Gross then



Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah scores the opening goal from the penalty spot

Asian Cup

Vietnam	0	2	Iran
Yemen	0	3	Iraq
Lebanon	0	2	Saudi Arabia

English Premier League

West Ham	1	0	Arsenal
Brighton	0	1	Liverpool
Burnley	2	1	Fulham
Cardiff City	0	0	Huddersfield Town
Crystal Palace	1	2	Watford
Leicester City	1	2	Southampton

Spanish La Liga

Leganos	1	0	Huesca
Valencia CF	1	1	Real Valladolid

French Ligue 1

Amiens	0	2	Paris Saint-Germain
--------	---	---	---------------------

\*Scores as of closing

14

goals have been scored by Mohamed Salah this season, putting him level with Arsenal's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Tottenham Hotspur's Harry Kane in the race for the Golden Boot

But the visitors found themselves a man down when Yann Valery was shown a red card for a second bookable offence after tugging the shirt of Marc Albrighton.

Southampton still doubled their lead just before half-time when Long pounced on a mistake by goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel.

Fulham remained in the relegation zone after a 2-1 loss to Burnley that saw them concede two own-goals in three minutes at Turf Moor as the Clarets -- who didn't have a shot on target -- moved three points clear of the drop.

Andre Schurrle put Fulham ahead in just the second minute but Burnley equalised in the 20th minute through Joe Bryan's own-goal and were soon in the lead when Denis Odoi also put through his own net.

Craig Cathcart scored at both ends as Watford won 2-1 away to Crystal Palace in a match coinciding with the second anniversary of former Hornets manager Graham Taylor's death.

Watford defender Cathcart gave Palace, whose manager Roy Hodgson is also a former England boss, a 38th-minute lead with an own-goal.

But he equalised midway through the second half before Tom Cleverley's volley into the top corner won the game for Watford with 16 minutes left.

Huddersfield remained bottom of the table following a goalless draw away to relegation-threatened Cardiff.

Salah passed up a glorious chance two minutes from time when he turned James Milner's driven cross wide from point-blank range.

That could have proved costly when Florin Andone escaped in behind the Liverpool defence in stoppage time, but his low cross found no takers.

And Liverpool held out to ensure a largely forgettable 90 minutes could be remembered as another important step on course to the title come May.

10-man Saints beat Leicester

At the other end of the table, 10-man Southampton moved a point clear of the bottom three with a 2-1 win away to Leicester.

James Ward-Prowse's penalty, awarded after Nampalys Mendy fouled Shane Long, gave the Saints an 11th-minute lead.

## Rice scores first Hammers goal to beat Arsenal

● Declan Rice's 48th-minute goal was enough for West Ham to beat Arsenal

AFP | London

Declan Rice's first West Ham goal secured a 1-0 win over Arsenal in a capital city derby clash at the London Stadium.

The victory in yesterday's early kick-off saw the Hammers move up to eighth in the Premier League table, on 31 points, ahead of the bulk of the weekend's fixtures.

Teenage midfielder Rice gave himself an early present for his 20th birthday on Monday by scoring the only goal of the game three minutes into the second half.

"I can't put it into the words," an elated Rice told Sky Sports. "The lads are always on at me to take the shot on more."

'Special talent'

West Ham captain Mark Noble



West Ham United's Irish defender Declan Rice celebrates after scoring

was almost as pleased as Rice himself, adding: "I am delighted for this young man to score the goal...He is a special talent and keeps working hard."

Defeat dented Arsenal's bid to break into the top four, with the Gunners still adrift of Chelsea -- their next opponents -- in the race for a Champions League place.

"It is difficult to win if you don't score," said Arsenal's Laurent Koscielny, after a defeat that meant the Gunners had won just one of their last seven

away Premier League matches.

The defender, looking ahead to next weekend's clash with Chelsea at the Emirates Stadium, said: "It is a home game against an opponent in the top four. We know what we need to do. We need to prepare all week for this important team."

West Ham named Marko Arnautovic in their starting line-up despite the Austrian forward's brother and agent saying Thursday he wanted to move to the Chinese Super League.

And it appeared Arnautovic



I am delighted for this young man to score the goal...He is a special talent and keeps working hard

MARK NOBLE

vic was waving goodbye to the home fans in a London Stadium record of over 59,000 when substituted in the 71st minute.

"We will see what happens in the next days," said Manuel Pellegrini, the West Ham manager.

"It is an issue that the club must see what is the best for the player, for the club and for everyone."

Former Arsenal favourite Samir Nasri started against his old club as the midfielder made his Premier League debut for the Hammers.

Koscielny and Shkodran Mustafi returned from injury for Arsenal but there was no place in their squad for Mesut Ozil.

## Iraq power into knockouts

AFP | Abu Dhabi

Iraq sank Yemen and Iran beat Vietnam as the neighbours and arch-rivals powered into the Asian Cup round of 16 yesterday ahead of their highly anticipated group decider next week.

Teenager Mohanad Ali's early solo strike kick-started Iraq's 3-0 victory in Sharjah, while Sardar Azmoun struck both goals in Iran's 2-0 win in Abu Dhabi.

Iraq and Iran will meet in Dubai on Wednesday to decide who tops Group D in a repeat of their combustible quarter-final of 2015, which Iraq won on penalties.

Iran, looking to end a 43-year title drought since last winning Asian football's most coveted prize, could have scored four or five but for some poor finishing in Abu Dhabi.

"It's a pity our performance didn't produce a couple more goals," Iran coach Carlos Queiroz told reporters.

"But winning is the best medicine in football. To win two games and score seven goals -- I have to praise my players because I am very demanding."

Saman Ghoddos and Mehdi Taremi went close for Asia's top-ranked team before Azmoun rose to head home a Ghoddos cross after 38 minutes.

The Rubin Kazan forward lashed in his third goal of the tournament from the edge of the box 20 minutes from time to give Iran a record ninth successive first-round victory dating back to 2007.



Hussein Al-Saedi of Iraq in action against Wahid Mohammed Al-Khyat of Yemen